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*Written and Compiled by me,
about the beginning of the first
Month, 1691.*

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Pastoral Letter
FROM THE
Four Catholic Bishops
TO THE
Lay-CATHOLICS of *England*.

Episcopal Authority, Dear Brethren,
of which You and your Catholic
Ancestors have been long deprived,
being lately, by a merciful Provi-
dence of God, and the Piety of His
Majesty, restor'd unto you; and
Our Persons, tho' unworthy of such a Dignity,
made choice of to bear the Weight, and undergo
the Sollicitude annexed to it: We have judged it
proper, before We separate Our selves in order to a
discharge of Our Duties in the respective Counties
committed to Our Care, to join in a common Ad-
dress unto You All, hoping that what comes thus
directed by an united Application, will make a
deeper Impression on your Minds, and dispose you
to an easier Compliance with the Fatherly Admo-

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nitions which everyone in his particular District
shall think fit to be made unto you.

Your Condition for many years past hath been
such, as enabl'd you to manifest a stedfastness in your
Religion, rather by suffering for it in your own
Persons, than by contributing actively towards the
planting it in the Minds and Hearts of your Fellow-
Subjects. The Exercise of it hath been private and
precarious, tending rather towards the Preservation
of it in your selves, than a Propagation of it in o-
thers. But now you are in Circumstances of letting
it appear abroad, and of edifying your Neighbors
by professing it publicly, and living up to the Rules
prescribed by it.

We need not tell you what Obligation you lie
under on this Account, and how unjustifiable your
Behavior will be in the Judgment of God and Men,
if it be not conformable to those Rules, if the Li-
berty you enjoy of professing your Religion be
not improved into Practices suitable to the Sancti-
ty thereof, and if the Truth of your Faith be not
manifested by an Exemplarity in your Lives.

Charity, which the Apostle declares to be the
End of the Law, is the Virtue by which your Faith
is to operate, and be kept alive : Your Under-
standings may be united without it, but your Hearts
cannot. This latter Union is that which maintains
the former, and renders it useful towards obtaining
the End for which it is bestowed upon you.

We

We cannot mind you of this important Duty with words more expressive of what We desire, than those which the same Apostle made use of to exhort the *Ephesians*: *We conjure you, as he did them, to walk in a manner worthy of the Vocation by which you are called, with all Humility and Meekness, with Patience supporting one another in Charity, sollicitous for maintaining the Unity of Spirit in a Bond of Peace.* Ep. 4.

You see of how great Concern this Unity of Spirit is unto you, by the care which the Apostle takes to have it well guarded. You likewise may observe the quality of the Guard which is set to secure it. The imployment of ordinary Guards is to secure Peace, but here Peace it self is appointed to be the Guard: Peace in the first place with God, by an entire submission to the Orders of his Divine Providence; from which connaturally follows a Peace within your selves, and a Peace with your Fellow-Subjects.

As Peace is a secure Guard to the Spirit of true Religion and Piety, so it is by the Apostle ranked in the third place amongst the Fruits of the Spirit. The Soul centers in God by Charity, and finding there an entire Satisfaction, rests in Peace. Gal. 5.

Our Intention in exhorting you to a Practice of Charity, is not that it be confin'd to persons of your own Religion: Such confinement would be a destruction of it; for true Charity hath no Bounds. You must love those of your Religion, because they

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are so; and others, that as they profess themselves to be Christians, they may become Members of the Catholic Church. You must evidence your Love towards these, by an inoffensiveness in your Behavior.

The memory of past hardships which you have suffered from some amongst them, may be apt to create provoking Animosities, and the Liberty you now enjoy may possibly tempt you to insult over those who formerly abridged you of it: But it must be your care to prevent or suppress all such irregular Motions. You must endeavor to tread in the Foot-steps of our Divine Master, who was so far from making such passionate returns, that he did not forbear, even in the height of his Persecutions, to signalize the Excess of his Charity to those who were guilty of them. St. Peter puts you in mind of this, proposing the Example of Christ to your imitation; who, when his Enemies treated him with most outrageous Language, was far from answering them in the same Dialect: When he was provok'd by them to the highest degree of a just Indignation, he did not so much as threaten them with the exercise of his Power. The same Apostle leaving us a Character of true Christians, declares, That they must be unanimous, compassionate, Lovers of the Brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble, not rendering evil for evil, railing for railing; but on the contrary returning Blessings to those who treated them in this manner.

1 Pet. 2.

1 Pet. 3.

Now if in quality of true Christians you ought to

to live up to this Character ; if you ought to make it good in the most provoking circumstances that Providence might place you in ; what is to be expected from you in these which at present you are favored with ? You are indulg'd a public Exercise of your Religion ; a great part of the Nation, whose Persuasion in Points of Religion doth differ most from Yours, and which in time past hath been severe upon your Persons, is willing to enter into a Friendly Correspondence with you ; and if some others do repine at your being Sharers in the Liberty which themselves enjoy with much greater Advantage, the most effectual means to convince them of their Error, is to edifie them by your good Example.

You live under a Prince of your own Religion, to whom, next unto God, you owe this Felicity. You have his Power to protect you in the free Exercise of your Religion, and his Example to encourage your discharge of this Duty in a most edifying manner. His Majesty's assiduousness at the Divine Service, and other Functions perform'd in his Chappel, notwithstanding the multitude of weighty Affairs, which might frequently excuse him from such Attendance ; the respectful Posture in which he performs this Religious Duty, and which argues a Presence of Mind no less than of his Body, cannot but invite you, both as good Catholics and good Subjects, to a Conformity with so Eminent a Pattern. What business can dispense you from discharging these

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these Obligations, when you see His Majesty under the Weight of the whole Government so punctual in His Compliance with them ?

It may seem needless to suggest unto you another Obligation you lie under, not only of a passive Obedience to His Majesty's Orders relating to the Government, but also of an active and cheerful Concurrence with Him therein : Your own Safety and Interest being concern'd in this, and depending on it, are sufficient Inducements for your endeavoring to give full Satisfaction in this Point.

His Majesty hath been graciously pleased not only to favor you with His Royal Protection, but moreover to honor many amongst you with a share of the Government under Him. He hath admitted you to Employments both Civil and Military, from which by the severity of our Laws you have formerly been excluded : He hath plac'd you in Circumstances of manifesting to the World that it was neither want of Loyalty nor Ability that occasion'd your former Exclusion : He hath capacitated you hereby to remove the Prejudices which in former Reigns your Religion and Persons have lain under. So that henceforth there will be no reason to apprehend your being Sufferets, or that your Fellow-Subjects will be preferr'd before you in management of public Trusts on these accounts, since Religion is no longer a Bar to your Preferment.

We therefore earnestly desire those amongst you
who

who are already in Offices, so to behave themselves in them, that neither His Majesty may have occasion to repent, nor His other Subjects to repine at the Choice he hath made of them. We exhort those who are not yet in public Employment, to bear their Lots with Modesty and Patience, without Murmuring or Envy. We conjure you all to abstain from speaking or acting any thing that may seem to have the least indecent reflection upon the Government. The Councils of Kings are Sacred, as well as their Persons ; and it is a kind of Sacrilege in Subjects to be too bold with either : Their Duty is, not to approach their Persons but with respect, nor discourse of their Councils without submission.

Rom. 13.

Let every Soul (We speak to you again in the words of St. Paul) be subject to Higher Powers ; for there is no Power but of God, and those that be, are ordained of God : Therefore he that resisteth Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God ; and they who resist, do purchase to themselves Damnation. What in this Text of the Apostle is said of Higher Powers, must be understood not only of the Supreme Authority which is seated in the King's Person, but proportionably also of that which His Majesty is pleas'd to impart to His Ministers of State, and other Magistrates in their respective stations. It is the King that acts principally in, and by those Subordinate Officers : His Royal Character being stampt upon them, challengeth respect from the rest of His Subjects, and renders their failings therein a

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A Pastoral Letter, &c.

Tri^opass in some measure against Majestie in full.
 Having thus minded you of the general and more
 substantial Duties incumbent on you, We do not
 judge it either necessary or proper to descend at pre-
 sent to such others as are of a more special Nature.
 Occasions hereafter will not be wanting of inculca-
 ting these, when We enter upon Our respective
 Provinces, where We are to dedicate Our Labors to
 your Spiritual Improvement, and where We hope
 to find such Dispositions, as by rendering Our Pasto-
 Feb. 13. ral Sollicitude profitable to you, may make it easie
 and comfortable to Our selves. Pray for Us; And
 the God of Peace, who brought out from the dead the great
 Pastor of the Sheep in the Blood of the Eternal Testament,
 our Lord Jesus Christ, fit you in all Goodness, working in
 you that which is pleasing in his sight.

Your most affectionate Servants in Christ,

John Bishop of Adramite. V. A.
 Bonaventure Bishop of Madaura. V. A.
 Philip Bishop of Aureliople. V. A.
 James Bishop of Callipoli. V. A.

L O N D O N:

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